

## **Annex 6. Topic 6: The development of training programs for taxonomic research**

### **1. Challenges to address by the Proposal**

Proposals should aim to strengthen the local capacity for biodiversity conservation by performing training activities including the use of taxonomic tools to expand and sustain local taxonomic expertise. They must implement and evaluate specific taxonomic training programs, being developed within TETTRIs project, in biodiversity hotspots and protected areas, focused on soil fauna, freshwater fauna and pollinators. Those training programs will follow the methodology “train the trainers” entailed in the TETTRIs project, aiming at the widening of taxonomic understanding and multiplying the educators locally. They will involve a blended learning approach that integrates both online and in-person components.

### **2. Practical impact on site**

Proposals should have various practical impacts on biodiversity conservation at local level. Needs analysis and final evaluation should be provided by the applicant, following the corresponding templates designed by the TETTRIs project (see 6. Specific conditions).

Firstly, the training programs will enable local communities to conduct taxonomic research and monitoring activities that are vital for effective biodiversity conservation.

Secondly, these projects will raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity conservation among local communities, which will foster a culture of conservation.

Lastly, they will establish long-term partnerships between local institutions and international networks, promoting the sustainability of biodiversity conservation efforts in the area.

### **3. Collaborative approach (compulsory activities)**

In the proposals a close collaboration with TETTRIs’ trainers and specialists is necessary to be demonstrated and implemented.

Proposals shall commit to ensure that one or more applicant members will have to participate in the training of future trainers, i.e. to be trained by the TETTRIs group in order to become a future local trainer of the proposed project (future local trainers hereafter). This training will be conducted centrally under the TETTRIs project.

#### **Basic training course specifications and target groups**

The following courses will be provided for future trainers’ training, and it is possible to select one or more courses to implement and evaluate, as 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties Projects (3PPs). The courses are designed specifically for specific target groups, and it is essential to adhere to this:

- a) **Soil fauna** (on the surface of and in the soil) - target group: **new generation of taxonomists**, which means **early-stage researchers and university students at B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D. level**. High level training course on surface and soil-living animals. The course will also incorporate advanced species identification techniques, like e-DNA, AI applications, imaging, etc.
- b) **Freshwater fauna**: - target group: **decision-makers**, including policy-makers and Governance, public servants and spatial planners, as well as **wildlife and NGO managers, conservationists, museum educators, science teachers and practitioners** related to environmental topics in industry and agriculture. In the case of vacancies, the new generation of taxonomists’ target group (as described above) could also participate. Intermediate training course on freshwater fauna and its importance for biodiversity and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 60/2000 for the characterization of the fresh waters’ ecological quality.

- c) **Pollinators - target group: citizen scientists. Low threshold training course.** The course will also cover information on the use of AI tools and/or digitised national reference collections.

**The training for future trainers will be conducted in two parts, online and face-to-face,** which is necessary to consider while scheduling the timeframe of the 3PPs.

The training framework is the same for all the three courses.

Supported projects will be contacted by TETTRIs trainers at the beginning of the project implementation, and together they will agree on the specific training dates.

#### **Framework training schedule**

a) **online training will take place from September 2024 to December 2024.** In September 2024, a link will be provided to the future local trainers, and **for one month** the online part will be open on the TETTRIs Moodle platform. At the end of the online course, they will be asked to evaluate the online training experience, send their feedback and cooperate with the TETTRIs trainers to incorporate their suggestions in the final version of the course.

b) **Face to face (field and lab) training will take place from February 2025 to May 2025, on-site, with a duration of maximum 5 working days.** According to the climatic conditions of the selected 3PP area, and within the above timeframe, a TETTRIs trainer will visit the location of the selected project and lead the training for the future local trainers, providing guidelines for their future training on the local nodes, adjusting it in their local environment and functional circumstances.

To provide this support, 3PP's budget needs to allocate funds for the TETTRIs' trainer, the course organiser, the future local trainers from the 3PP, and the supportive training participants (project partners or stakeholders), including per diems, travel expenses, accommodation, meals, and potentially travel insurance. At the same time, it is necessary not to forget about the planning of expenses for first-aid kits, supplies, tools, and materials for obtaining natural samples and observations, following the "TETTRIs 3PPs Budget Form" here:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1oleEO\\_YBL\\_UokLZpyhoLvqVdH2USNLP5/edit?usp=drive\\_link&ouid=103685327543233047503&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1oleEO_YBL_UokLZpyhoLvqVdH2USNLP5/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103685327543233047503&rtpof=true&sd=true)

The supported project will be responsible for the complete organisational provision of field training and the participation of the target group specified, always with the guidance of the TETTRIs trainer.

At the end of the face-to-face part, the trainees will be asked to evaluate it, send their feedback and cooperate with the TETTRIs trainers to incorporate their suggestions in the final version of the course.

#### **Certificate**

After having successfully completed both the online and the face-to-face trainings, the future trainers will be awarded a certificate that will entitle them to use the acquired knowledge, skills, materials, and online resources to conduct further similar blended (online and face-to-face) training programs, even after the TETTRIs project has ended. More specifically, the provided certification will include the following:

1. Certificate of Attendance by TETTRIs with ECVET Units (European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training)
2. Certificate by TETTRIs according to Europass Certificate Supplement (certifying analytically the knowledge, skills, competencies and behaviours gained)
3. ECTS Credits for students in case of a University candidate (optional).

#### **Final version of the course**

The final version of the courses will be created at the end of the TETTRIs project, based on the evaluation and the feedback conducted in cooperation and shared with the future trainers who will have successfully completed them.

#### **4. Innovation**

In addition to the collaboration with TETTRIs consultants, proposals can also include own creative activities and innovations, such as (**but not limited to**):

- The training programs will provide participants with the knowledge, skills, competencies and behaviours to train new participants from the target groups, using the specific training course implementation with possible remote support from the TETTRIs trainer. After completing the online and face-to-face training of future trainers, a course led by a future local trainer and with distant support from the TETTRIs trainer could be held within the project. It is necessary to adhere to the basic course specification and target group for which the new local trainer has been trained.
- The training programs will provide participants with the knowledge, skills, competencies and behaviours which can be immediately used within the project to involve newly trained participants, for example, in conducting surveys, identifying species, implementing the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 60/2000 for the characterization of the fresh waters' ecological quality, and monitoring population trends in the studied locality.

## 5. Expected outcomes

The availability of taxonomic knowledge and expertise is fundamental to understand biodiversity and take the proper measures to conserve and restore it. In parallel, it is essential to integrate the taxonomic science in education, governance, and industry to support decision making and ensure long-term relevance of taxonomy as instrumental science for biodiversity.

Through the training programs it is expected that participants will gain new knowledge, skills, competencies and behaviours in the field of taxonomy, thus increasing expertise within the target groups of new generation taxonomists, citizen scientists, and other taxonomy-related professionals, which will lead to the creation and improvement of taxonomic research capacity near biodiversity hotspots and protected areas.

## 6. Specific conditions

- **At the start** of each selected project, it is necessary to conduct a **needs analysis** (template prepared by TETTRIs) to identify the knowledge and skills' gaps in taxonomic research for biodiversity conservation, in the local biodiversity hotspots and/or protected areas, with a focus on pollinators, freshwater fauna, and/or soil fauna.
- **At the end** of each selected project, it is necessary to fill in an **evaluation form** (template prepared by TETTRIs), which will show if the gaps of the needs' analysis have been covered, and to which extent.
- **Future local trainers** will be identified in the project proposal as individuals who are **experts in taxonomy** of taxa belonging to pollinators, freshwater fauna, and/or soil fauna and have some experience in adult learning on taxonomy-biodiversity topics. Future trainers are not general educators.
- **TETTRIs project infrastructure, specialists and trainers will be available** from 1 September 2024 to 31 May 2025.

### General Instructions to applicants:

To be considered for funding, proposals should clearly address all three key aspects of the topic, i.e. 1) demonstrating a strong practical impact, 2) implement a collaborative approach, and 3) integrate innovative dimensions to biodiversity identification, monitoring and/or conservation.

Proposals should provide a detailed budget and timeline, as well as clear metrics for measuring project success.



Applicants should also demonstrate relevant experience and expertise in areas such as adult training, biodiversity science, citizen science, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

Citizen science aspects can be involved in all topics. However, proposals focused primarily or exclusively in Citizen science engagement will fall under Topic 7.

See the Call text for further detailed information.